

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING,
BOARD OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL
DISTRICT #225, COOK COUNTY,
ILLINOIS, DECEMBER 9, 1997**

A special meeting of the Board of Education, School District No. 225 was held on Tuesday, December 9, 1997, at approximately 7:30 p.m. at Glenbrook South High School, 4000 W. Lake Avenue, Glenview, IL, pursuant to due notice to all members and the public.

The president called the meeting to order and announced the reasons for the special meeting of the Board of Education. Upon calling of the roll, the following members answered present: Isenberg, Lerner, Lyons, Rogal, Seymour, Shact, Wulf. Also present: Babington, Brockelman, Court, Freeman, Herrick, Lacivita, McGrew, Rainier, Schilling, Smith, Taccona.

WORKSHOP REGARDING PROPOSED BLOCK CLASS SCHEDULE

Mr. Lyons reviewed the procedures for the meeting. Mr. Lyons stated that the block schedule proposal will be on the December 15 Board agenda for discussion and vote.

Dr. McGrew stated that the associate principals would provide a 5 minute overview of what the schedule is and the purpose and intent. Dr. McGrew introduced GBS Associate Principal, Dr. Pam Taccona and GBN Associate Principal, Mr. Bill Babington. Dr. Taccona put together a packet of information and provided written answers to Board member questions.

Dr. Taccona stated that the reason for looking at the block schedule was to provide a better day for students and staff. The process began six years ago. The schedule being proposed is a basic block schedule with 4 blocks on a blue day and 4 blocks on a gold day. This schedule is considered a 4 by 4 schedule. Some courses will be offered for 90 or 95 minutes on an alternating day format which is considered every other day. Some courses in math and science are designed to meet every day for 90 or 95 minutes and will conclude the instruction in that course in one term or 18 weeks. This schedule allows for both alternating day courses and courses that meet every day. The plan is for math and science courses to be 95 minutes in length and all other courses will be 90 minutes. If the student is in a 90 minute class they will have a 10 minute passing period to go to their next class.

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Math and science classes would have a 5 minute passing period. The schedule also allows for resource times for students. The schedule will provide 3 classes on one day. On the following day a student would have 4 classes. On the day the student has 3 classes there is an opportunity for study hall and resource periods. A student may have 45 minute resource period and then may have 45 minutes of free time. Fifty minute lunch periods are scheduled within the schedule. Open lunch will continue and the schedule will accommodate open lunch as it currently is. Dr. Taccona stated this is a work in progress and committees are formed to work out the details.

Mr. Babington stated that a lot of the information for Glenbrook North is the same. The GBN schedule is the result of work which began in 1995. The departments were asked to develop a position paper and the schedule presented was the best compromise. The GBN schedule has eight blocks, 90 minutes in length, 3 lunches and is approximately the same length as the GBS schedule. The passing periods are different based on the contract with the bus company. The GBN schedule would allow students to take 7 classes on an alternating day format. Every class would meet every other day. Students can take either 6 or 7 classes. Two things GBN wants is an Advocacy Program and fitting student resource time into the schedule. Mr. Babington stated they visited a school in Carmel, Indiana and one period during the day nothing is allowed to be scheduled during that time to allow students to get help, make up work, provide services to students in need or at-risk, schedule assemblies and field trips so the time students are taken out of class is minimized by using that block of time for some of those other things.

Mr. Babington stated that many of the features of the GBN and GBS schedule are the same, but the main difference for GBN is the amount of time during the day.

Mr. Babington stated that GBN is ready to move to the new schedule and now he would like to answer any additional questions so that they can move forward.

Dr. McGrew stated that a presentation was made to the Board a while back and the Board was asked to pose any questions they felt were germane in making a decision. There were a range of questions and many of them were provided in written form. Dr. McGrew stated that there seemed to be two dominant questions regarding cost and why the GBN and GBS schedules are different. Dr. McGrew said that the administration would try to answer those questions.

Dr. McGrew stated that some costs would vary depending on the scenario. Some costs are upfront, one-time only costs such as staff development. The single variable on the costs is the number of classes the students take. As students take more classes, which this schedule allows, the cost goes up. If the number of the classes that students take remains the same, other than the upfront costs, there should be no additional cost. Dr. McGrew asked Dr. Schilling to speak to the costs.

Dr. Schilling prepared and reviewed a handout of the cost estimates. Dr. Schilling stated that for the 1998-99 school year, the recurring costs for the first year would be \$308,000. Dr. Schilling projected the costs out five years at a 5% increase per year. Under the scenarios that currently exist, students are taking an average of 6.5 or 6.6, but less than 7. If students took 7 classes at each school, it would probably require an additional 10 teachers. Ten additional teachers would cost \$500,000 between the two schools. The short term costs for the first year would be \$228,000, \$308,000 for recurring, so the first year cost if everything remained status quo, is \$536,000. Then the cost drops to \$323,000, and then in the \$300,000 to \$400,000 range each year for a total cost over five years of \$1.92 million dollars. If the students would increase the number of classes that they could take to 7, on the average, then the bottom line represents the costs above plus the additional ten teachers, which is a million the first year and then goes to about 850,000 and runs across to 4.6 million. Dr. Schilling stated that he provided minimum and maximum costs.

Board members asked questions about the financial aspect of the schedule which were answered by members of the administration.

Dr. McGrew stated that the schedule differs in terms of the number of minutes and a slight difference in the allocation of the periods. While the schedules are essentially built on eight blocks of time, there are slight differences.

Mr. Smith stated that there are three differences between the two schedules. At GBS they would like to do intensive and A/B; whereas, at GBN they are proposing an alternate day A/B. The second difference is at GBN they are proposing a resource period in Block 6. What GBS would like to do is have resource periods throughout the eight periods in the day. The third difference is the length of the school day. Mr. Smith stated that he met with the bus company last week and was told that if the lights on Lake and Pfingsten changed, that would allow them to go ten minutes later, which is what they have been able to do working with IDOT. They were able to get the extra ten minutes to make the ten minute passing periods in between periods. GBS is not interested in doing an all school Advocacy. GBS tried Advocacy two years ago on the freshman level and found that the best type of Advocacy work was done with the special interests type of homeroom where a teacher who is also the student's classroom teacher and then pull the student out for different advocacy activities. Mr. Smith stated that GBS would like to expand that program and have all freshman take an elective class during that period and then pull them out for different types of things during the year. The GBS teachers were passionate about offering intensive and A/B. The schedule difference was discipline related and something that the teachers within given departments felt was important for teaching their discipline. The departments chose if they wanted to go intensive or A/B.

Board members asked questions regarding the schedule differences which were answered by the administration. The administration described how staff would be prepared for the new schedule.

Mr. Lyons asked when the committees will be finished with their work so that the Board could follow-up. Mr. Smith stated that the goal is to finish by the end of the first semester.

Dr. McGrew stated that summer school and the Evening High School are essentially block schedules and have worked well for many years. He said that the end of the discussion has been reached and the administration is ready to move forward. Dr. McGrew requested final questions so that a decision can be made on December 15 so the staff can be advised if it is a go or a no go.

Note: See attached Agenda Item #2

RECOGNITION OF COMMUNITY VISITORS FOR COMMENTS LIMITED TO TOPICS ON THIS AGENDA

Community members were given an opportunity to comment and raise concerns regarding the proposed schedule.

Mr. Lyons stated that the block schedule will be on the December 15 Board meeting agenda for discussion and vote. He asked the Board how they wished to handle any additional questions or follow-up.

Mr. Wulf stated that Board members could ask questions, but he didn't know what would be gained by doing that.

Mrs. Rogal stated that most of her questions are related to the various committees, so those questions are still unanswered. Her main concerns are about providing adequate training and staff development. She said she understands that the staff have been working on the schedule for five years and knows that staff would like to proceed, but she is concerned that the preparation time is being rushed. Mrs. Rogal wants to be sure that the staff is trained sufficiently so that any questions that can be dealt with ahead of time are dealt with and the schedule will be successful. Mrs. Rogal stated that she supports the schedule in theory.

Mr. Shact said he agrees with Mrs. Rogal. He said it is important for the community members who were in attendance to understand the intent of this meeting which was to educate the Board and make them more comfortable in making this kind of change. All of the Board members have a certain degree of unease. Mr. Shact said that the input from the audience was useful. Mr. Shact said a lot of progress has been made since the last session and he is more at ease and comfortable with the concept.

Mr. Lerner stated that it is unfortunate that many of the audience were no longer in attendance. He said that the discussion brought him to the conclusion that this is not an exact science. This project has been in process for almost five years. Some of the Board members have been on the Board for about six weeks, so they have been forced to attempt to digest four or five years of work in four or five weeks. As a new Board member he doesn't have the advantage of what came before, other than the written literature provided.

Mrs. Isenberg said it is a major decision, whether it is made on December 15 or the Board waits another 30 or 60 days. The Board has to make a decision one way or another sooner or later. After listening to staff and hearing the community's questions and statements, she now has new questions that she would like to have answered before she votes. She said she is not sure if she has decided which questions need to be answered before she votes and which questions can wait. She would like to know if within the next couple

of days if the Board has additional questions, which questions can be answered before December 15 and which questions will be answered in the future. She is uncomfortable making a decision now. She stated we have good staff, kids who are academically oriented and supportive parents. Those are three givens that will be there no matter what kind of schedule we have. Some of the community members are concerned that we will be unable to maintain our academic excellence. Can we get through this because of the staff, students, and parents being there and will that help us get through whatever we do if we change the schedule?

Mr. Seymour thanked the administration for their presence at the Board meeting and making the evening a learning experience. Mr. Seymour stated that the faculty will become a variable part of the budget. No longer do we have the firm number because we don't know what kind of classes we will have throughout the year. He said that is a minor issue, but one that will have to be looked at down the road. Mr. Seymour stated that all the instructional supervisors need to be on board with the schedule or it will fail in that subject area. Mr. Seymour is in favor of the new schedule, but he would not be ready to vote on December 15. He stated that he needs more data and answers to questions.

Mr. Lyons stated that this topic has been talked about for the 5 or 6 years, but what was presented this evening is different than the original guidelines and new Board members may not be that far behind because things keep changing. Mr. Lyons stated that some of the answers to the written questions were cleared up, but he is not comfortable with the additional teaching staff. Mr. Lyons stated that the Board consensus is to proceed on the 15th, but whether there will be a definite answer on the 15th depends on whether the additional questions get answered. He indicated that there needs to be open discussion and feedback. The information needs to be provided in a timelier manner in order to make a decision. From the Board's standpoint, they are being asked to review financial information which wasn't available until the evening of the Board meeting.

Dr. McGrew stated that if there weren't compelling reasons to adopt the block schedule, it would have been far easier for the administration to ignore the proposal and not make any changes at all. The schedule we have now is not a good schedule. Forty minute increments of time are not good time increments for teaching. Dr. McGrew stated we need to change the time periods, but how we change them is up for consideration. The proposed schedule is an attempt to make things better for the schools, curriculum, etc. Dr. McGrew stated this is not an exact science; it is best estimate, best evaluation and best professional judgment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Lerner, seconded by Mr. Shact, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 11:00 p.m.

Upon call for a vote on the motion, all present voted aye.*

Motion carried.

* Means Isenberg, Lerner, Lyons, Rogal, Seymour, Shact, and Wulf all voted aye.

CERTIFIED TO BE CORRECT:

PRESIDENT - BOARD OF EDUCATION

SECRETARY - BOARD OF EDUCATION

NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING: Dec. 15, 1997 7:30 P.M.
Glenbrook Administration Bldg.
1835 Landwehr Road
Glenview, Illinois